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OCCASIONAL PAPER 22

W. A. KENYON

Methodist Point

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ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY

ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

W. A. KENYON

Methodist Point

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Preface

The field work described in this report was carried out between April 29th and June 30th, 1968, by a crew that varied between five and fourteen people. While I was responsible for the overall supervision of the project, the actual field-work was directed by Mr. Burke Penny, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario.

Most of the routine laboratory work was done by Mrs. Cecilia Finnigan, Mrs. Caroline Parmenter and Miss Peta Daniels, all of this office. Studio photographs were taken by Mr. A. Williams, Royal Ontario Museum; drawings were done by Mr. Claus Breede and Miss Heli Ottas, Royal Ontario Museum.

I deeply appreciate the assistance of Mr. Penny and my colleagues at the Museum. I am deeply indebted also to Mr. Mike Gwynn, who brought the site at Methodist Point to my attention and freely shared with us his detailed knowledge of the area.

Introduction

The Ontario Department of Lands and Forests recently acquired a large block of land on Methodist Point, Tiny Township, Simcoe County, Ontario, to be developed into a provincial park. Through the writings of the Reverend Father A. E. Jones, S.J., the Department suspected that the historic Huron village of Ihonitiria was located within the proposed park boundaries. This was suggested also by the excavations and surveys that had been carried out by Mr. Gwynn. He located within the park what appeared to be a large Huron village that had been occupied in the historic period. In addition, the village was roughly — but only roughly — in the area that Jones, following the Jesuit Relations, had designated as the location of Ihonitiria.

Naturally, the Department of Lands and Forests wanted to make sure that no significant archaeological deposits would be disturbed by their park development. But such assurance could only be gained by a detailed examination of the village to determine its perimeter, and by an archaeological survey of the entire park area to locate and delimit any other archaeological deposits that it might contain.

The Royal Ontario Museum agreed to carry out this work under contract with the Department of Lands and Forests. A description of that work constitutes the first section of this report. The second section is devoted to a description and analysis of the artifacts that were recovered from the village.

The Village

In the absence of any visible features such as walls or earthworks, there is only one way to locate the boundaries of long abandoned Indian villages such as are found throughout Ontario. While the method is theoretically simple, it can be, and usually is, extremely time-consuming. It consists essentially of digging randomly scattered holes along a series of lines which radiate outward from a datum-point that is located within the village. Specimens, flint chips and food refuse, etc. are tabulated for each square and, if the site is stratified, for each level. When a point is reached, on each line, where further test-pits all prove sterile, it is assumed that that point is on the perimeter of the village. By connecting the points on a series of such lines, the limits of a village can be determined with reasonable accuracy.

At the Methodist Point site, we simply established a datum-point at a random spot which Mr. Gwynn said was within the village. That is, he assured us that pottery fragments, flint chips, etc. would be found if we moved out in any direction from that spot. From that datum-point a north-south and an east-west line were laid out; along these lines, a series of five-foot squares was excavated to subsoil. Each square was oriented so that either the north-south or the east-west line formed one of its sides. Because a dense stand of second growth timber blankets the site, the test-squares

were not placed at regular intervals along the lines, but were placed at convenient spots between the larger trees, and at some multiple of five feet from the datum-point. As a result of this exploration, we found that the village occupied an area of roughly 12 acres.¹

We excavated a total of 100 five foot squares, or an area of 2,500 square feet. As the average depth of the squares was 0.985 feet, a total of 91.20 cubic yards of earth was moved, and 16,411 archaeological specimens were collected. Most of these specimens — undecorated body-sherds and flint chips, for example — were of no scientific value. They were simply tabulated and then discarded. But as an indication of the richness of the site, the figures show that 180 specimens per cubic yard were found. When we consider only those specimens which were washed, catalogued, and returned to the Museum for detailed study, the total drops to 1,158, or 12.69 per cubic yard.

The Survey

Methodist Point is located at the tip of the peninsula that juts northwestward into Georgian Bay to the east of Nottawasaga Bay. The proposed park area (Fig. 1) consists of two different geological zones: first, a narrow strip of gently sloping boulder pavement along the north edge of the park. This stretches inland from the water to the foot of a steep bluff which runs from the western edge of the park to a point south of Stoney Point where it levels off. Ignoring the northward projections of Methodist and Stoney Points, this strip is roughly 800 feet wide at the west edge of the park and 1,800 feet wide at the east end of the bluff. Second, an undulating, sandy plateau, mostly above the 700 foot contour, which covers the major portion of the park area. This plateau is highest in the west, where elevations up to 970 feet are recorded, and becomes both lower and less hilly to the east. Second Lake, for example, with an elevation of some 643 feet above sea-level is only 65 feet above Georgian Bay, while the hills to the west rise almost 400 feet above it.

The steep bluff which separates the plateau from the narrow, rocky strip along the shore starts roughly at the 640 foot contour and rises some 300 feet at the west edge of the park, and 100 feet at its eastern end.

Although they will be described separately, the two phases of our work at Methodist Point were done concurrently. The survey was predicated on the assumption that Iroquois village-sites would be situated on the plateau rather than the rocky and swampy strip along the shore. It was assumed, further, that any village would have to be located within a reasonable distance of a source of water. Our first move, then, was to drive along every passable road or trail in and around the park to locate water sources. Next we walked

¹As there were no bench-marks within a reasonable distance of the site, its exact location was not determined. It is, however, either on or very close to the north end of Lot 4, Concession 20, Tiny Township, Simcoe County. Its geographic co-ordinates — again approximately — are 80° 1' W., 44° 23' N. The circled number 1 on Figure 1 marks the location of the village.

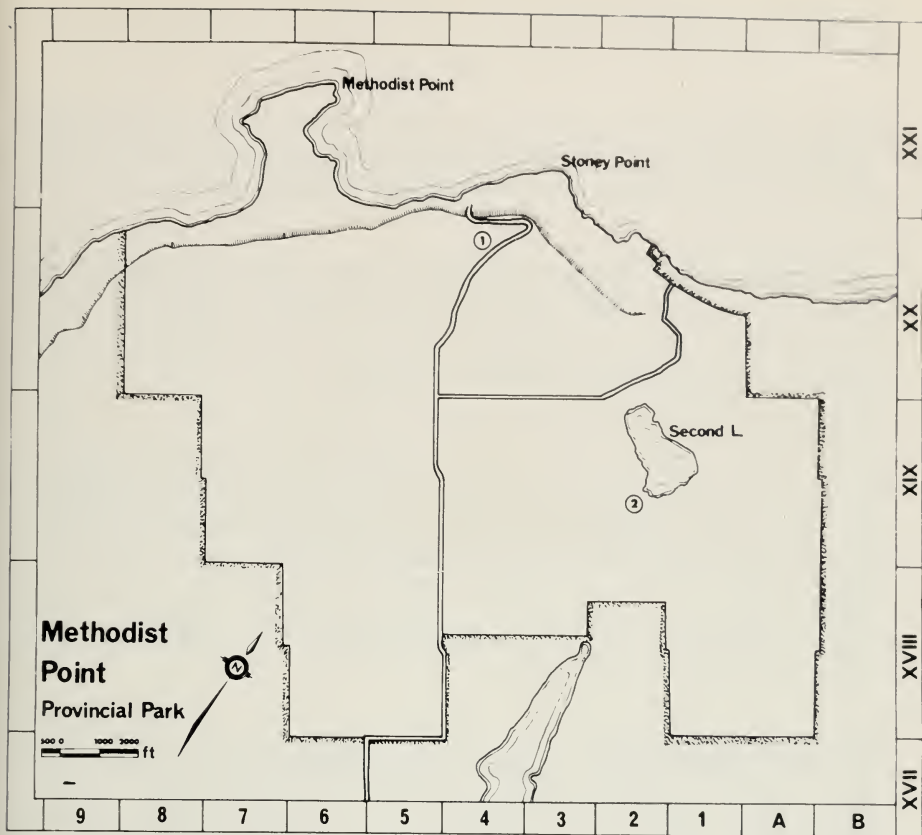


Figure 1 Methodist Point Provincial Park.

along the top of the bluff looking for springs or streams; then along the foot of the bluff to locate any springs or streams that might not be visible from the plateau. This, together with some general survey in even the most unlikely places, turned up seven different areas that seemed to warrant intensive examination. These were four springs along the bluff, the area south and west of Second Lake, the area north of Farlain Lake, and the area north and east of Macey Lake.²

These spots were investigated by lines of students digging random test holes every few paces. The only Indian material that was located during the survey was found at the southwest corner of Second Lake. Although this find could not be investigated in detail, there can be little doubt that it is either a historic or late pre-historic Huron village.

As a result of the survey, then, we can say that it is rather unlikely that any large Indian villages exist within the park area except at the southwest corner of Second Lake (No. 2, Fig. 1), and the one on top of the bluff which was brought to our attention by Mr. Gwynn.

²The last two lakes are actually outside the park, but sufficiently close that they might, at one time, have served as a source of water for people living within the present park boundaries.

Artifact Analysis

Adzes — 3

One complete adze, and parts of two others were excavated. The complete specimen (Plate 1, Fig. 11), like the two fragments, was fashioned from schist. It is 14 cm. long, 4.8 cm. wide at the bit end, and 1.9 cm. thick.

Projectile Points — 2

Apart from one tip-fragment, only two projectile points were found, one of flint and one of bone. The triangular flint point (Plate 1, Fig. 7) is 37 mm. long and 14 mm. wide. The triangular bone point (Plate 1, Fig. 8) is 4.0 cm. long and 12 mm. wide with a deeply concave base.

Scrapers — 9

The nine flint scrapers in the sample include four end-scrapers (Plate 1, Fig. 9), three more or less rectangular scrapers with parallel sides (Plate 1, Fig. 10), and two irregular flakes with secondary flaking along one side only. The specimens range from 2.2 cm. to 4.7 cm. in length.

Whetstones — 1

A single rectangular whetstone of schist was found. It was polished on three sides, the fourth side being a break.

Polished Stone Objects — 1

The object shown on Plate 3, Fig. 1, is of polished, banded slate. The blunt end is slightly battered as though it had been used as a hammer. The condition of the pointed end also suggests that it too might have been used as a hammer or pick. Total length is 6.3 cm.; major diameter is 3.0 cm.; the perforation is 1.1 cm. in diameter. No conclusion as to the function of the object has been reached. In all probability, however, it was produced by some pre-Iroquoian culture, and simply picked up by some Huron who took it home as a curiosity (cf. Warren K. Moorehead, 1917, pp. 180 and 182).

Beads — 13

Of the 13 beads that were excavated, only two are of European glass. One is a red, tubular bead; the other, a blue round bead.

Two beads are of steatite. One, a 4 mm. thick disc, is 14 mm. in diameter, with a 3 mm. perforation that was drilled from both sides (Plate 1, Fig. 2). The other (Plate 1, Fig. 1) is probably the tip of a pipe that was re-worked to make a bead. It is 14 mm. long, 14 mm. in diameter at the larger end, with a 4 mm. bore.

A single shell bead (Plate 1, Fig. 5) was fashioned from the columella of a conch shell. It is 4.4 cm. long, 1.5 cm. in diameter, with an irregular perforation of about 4 mm. The remaining eight beads are of bird bone (Plate 1, Fig. 3, 4, and 6), and vary in length between 1.6 cm. and 6.8 cm.

Bone Awls — 7

Of the seven bone awls, six were fashioned from mammal bones, while the remaining specimen (Plate 2, Fig. 1) is of bird bone. They range in length

from 4.5 cm. to 16.9 cm. On Plate 2, Fig. 4 is fashioned from the baculum of some large mammal, and Fig. 5 from a deer ulna. Fig. 3, while catalogued as an awl, may in fact be a projectile point.

Bone Needles — 1

The single bone needle-fragment from the site (Plate 2, Fig. 2) was probably some 7.6 cm. long. The gouged perforation is 7 mm. long.

Antler Objects — 1

The bit-end of an antler chisel or wedge was found. This fragment has a curved cutting edge and is approximately 2.7 cm. wide.

Copper Fragments — 6

The thin, irregular pieces of copper which the site produced are probably fragments of copper trade-kettles. In any event, they are of European origin.

Pipes and Pipe Fragments — 73

Although the excavation produced a total of 73 pipes and pipe fragments, only 18 of these are analyzable, and only one is complete (Plate 4, Fig. 11). Following the terminology of Wright (1966) and others, the 18 analyzable pipes fall into the following five types: Iroquois Ring — 10, Plain Trumpet — 4, Acorn Ring — 2, Conical Ring — 1, and Conical Punctate — 1 (see Plate 4).

Toy Pots — 29

Only four of the 29 rim-sherds from toy pots are decorated. One of these (Plate 3, Fig. 2) was almost completely restored. A small vessel, it is 7.4 cm. high, with an oral diameter of 5.7 cm. The rim is undecorated. A fine, irregular, incised line encircles the pot at the base of the neck. Below this is a parallel line of closely spaced punctations, then an extremely irregular band of opposed triangles filled with parallel incised lines.

One rimsherd is decorated only with a line of closely spaced punctations at the base of the rim. The two remaining rimsherds from toy pots are probably from the same vessel. They have vertical (?) incised lines on the rim and a horizontal line of closely spaced punctations on the shoulder.

Pottery

Methodist Point pottery varies in colour from a drab grey to a reddish brown. Examination of the edges of freshly broken sherds shows that firing was very irregular. Many sherds were completely fired, but the majority of sherds have a dark streak in the centre which is evidence of incomplete firing.

Tempering is of decomposed granite; hardness of body sherds as measured on Mohs scale averages 3.4. This figure should probably be accepted as an order of magnitude rather than an exact measurement. Some of the sherds were in an almost putty-like condition when they were excavated, and it is possible that the tests were run before they were all thoroughly dried. I suspect that the actual hardness of the Methodist Point pottery lies between 3.4 and 4.0.

The thickness of body-sherds, as determined from a sample of 1,000 sherds, ranges from 2.0 to 14.0 mm., with an average of 6.3 mm.

The Methodist Point site produced a total of 507 analyzable rims. Our criteria for accepting or rejecting a rim were: (1) that the interior, lip and exterior of each sherd must be present, and (2) that the height of the sherd must be at least twice the height of the collar.³ This does not give us precisely comparable data, but is the best we can do with the materials at hand.

TABLE 1

Classes of Rim-sherds

Group	No.	%
1	2	0.39
2	193	38.07
3	148	29.19
4	18	3.55
5	14	2.76
6	41	8.09
7	45	8.88
8	46	9.07
Total	507	100.00

When the sample of rim-sherds was laid out for study, we first attempted to fit it into the typological categories that are usually employed for the analysis of Iroquois pottery. We found, however, that it would not fit, even approximately. For example, we found that among 86 sherds which would unquestionably be classified as "Lalonde High Collar" by a casual observer, not one would meet Ridley's specifications (1952:205). This together with similar difficulties in other areas forced us either to abandon the currently employed typological system completely, or to define new pottery types. Being seriously alarmed at the high birth-rate in archaeological terminology, I decided to do an attribute analysis of the materials rather than contribute to the proliferation of new "types."

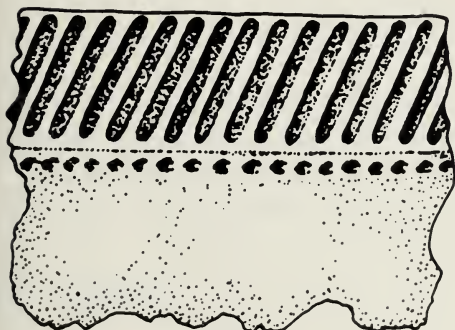
Our analytical procedure, then, was as follows. First, a full scale section of each rim-sherd was drawn. Next, we copied the various designs with which the pottery was decorated. Castellations were treated separately, but again, each form and design was recorded, and all collar heights were measured and tabulated (Table 6). At this point, the rim-sherds were divided into eight different groupings as follows:

³This criterion was not applied to that group of sherds which is usually typed as Lalonde High Collar.

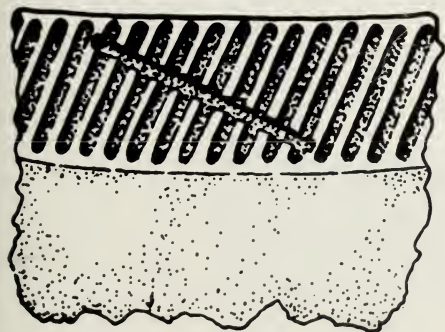
Group 1 — Undecorated rims.



Group 2 — Vertical and/or diagonal parallel incised⁴ lines on the collar.

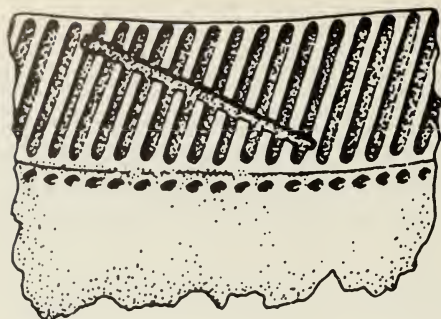


Group 3—The same as Group 2, but with the addition of a horizontal row of closely spaced punctates immediately below the collar.



Group 4 — This group is the same as Group 2 with the addition of a horizontal or diagonal line crossing the basic lines at an obtuse angle or a right angle.

⁴Although it is customary to describe Iroquois pottery as “incised”, in actual fact it was probably decorated by “trailing” or “linear stamping.”



Group 5 — This group is the same as Group 4, with the addition of a horizontal line of closely spaced punctates immediately below the collar.

Group 6 — The collars of this group are dominated by opposed triangles, mostly filled with hachuring, but occasionally left blank. The blank triangles are usually outlined by punctations. Some of this group of sherds are decorated, in addition, by shallow notches on the outer edge of the lip, some by three horizontal incised lines at the base of the collar, and some by both.

Group 7 — This group is the same as Group 6, with the addition of a line of closely spaced punctates immediately below the collar.

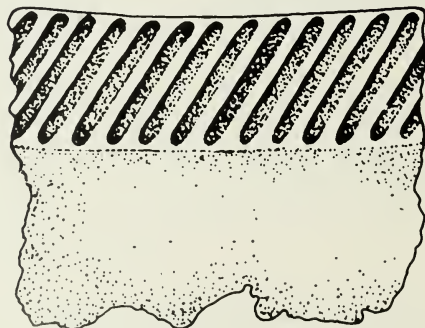
Group 8 — This is a miscellaneous or residual category.

The two small sherds in Group 1 require no further comment. Nor can any conclusions be drawn from the Group 8 sherds. These miscellaneous specimens are so fragmentary or so faintly marked that they cannot be analyzed.

TABLE 2 ►

GROUP 2 RIM SHERDS

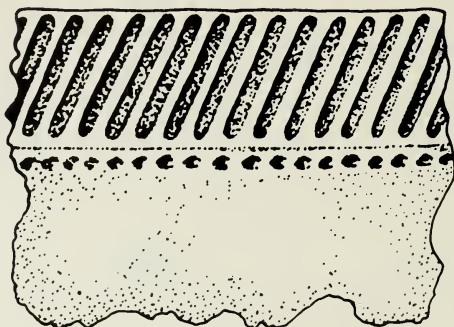
Distribution of Secondary Decoration



Number	Interior	Lip	Neck	Shoulder	Castel. Form	Castel. Design
130	—	—	—	—	—	—
11	—	Incised	—	—	—	—
6	Incised	—	—	—	—	—
4	Incised	—		—	—	—
4	—	—		—	—	—
3	Incised	—			?	
3	—	—	—		—	—
3	—	—	—		—	—
3	—	Punctated	—	—	—	—
3	Incised	—		—	—	—
2	—	—	—	—		
2	—	—	—		—	—
2	Incised	—		—		same as rim
2	—	—	—	—		same as rim
2	—	—	—	—		
1	—	—	—	—		same as rim
1	Incised	—			—	—
1	—	—	—	—		
1	—	—	—	—		
1	—	—	—	—		
1	—	—		—	—	—
1	Incised	—	—	—		
1	—	—		—		same as rim
1	—	Incised	—	—		same as rim
1	—	—	—			same as rim
1	—	—		—	—	—
1	—	—		—	—	—
1	—	—	—			

GROUP 3 RIM SHERDS

Distribution of Secondary Decoration



The one exception is the specimen illustrated on Plate 3, Fig. 3. Only four sherds of this variety were found, and they are all from one pot.

An examination of the remaining groups (2 to 7) revealed that Nos. 6 and 7 (Plates 8 and 9) were remarkably uniform. That is, with one exception, they all lacked interior, lip and neck decoration. The exception had a grooved lip, and was streaked with irregular but roughly vertical lines of black pigment.⁵ An additional unifying feature of these sherds is that all castellations are of the nubbin variety. Variations in collar design and rim forms are as described by Frank Ridley (1952:205).

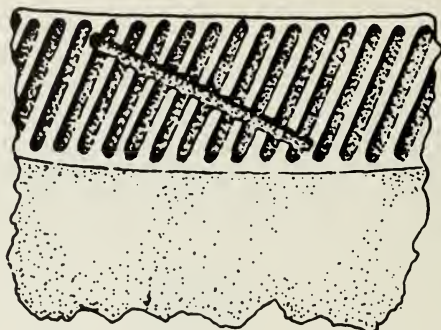
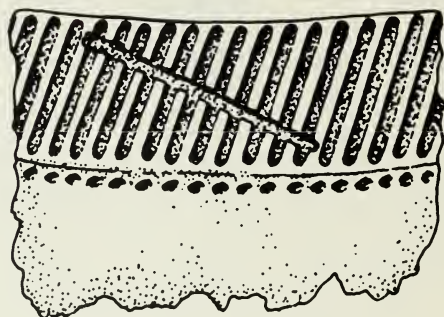
With these sherds, there is a positive and absolute correlation between collar design, collar height and rim-form. They can be segregated from the total sherd sample either visually or metrically, and without recourse to any archaeological "judgement" or "expertise." For example, every Methodist Point rim-sherd with a collar height of 29 mm. or more will have one of the collar designs shown on Plates 8 and 9 (see Table 6).

The remaining groups, Nos. 2 to 5, were more difficult to deal with because they exhibited a variety of rim-forms, castellations and secondary features. A table was therefore drawn up for each of these groups (Tables 2 to 5) charting the distribution and variety of decoration on the interior, lip, neck and shoulder, together with castellation form and castellation decoration. Having assembled and tabulated these primary data, we then subjected them to visual, mechanical and statistical⁶ analysis to see if there were any con-

⁵This was the only instance of painted pottery found at the site.

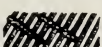
⁶I would like to thank Mr. Michael M. Parmenter, Tutor, Department of Mathematics, University of Toronto, for his kind assistance with statistical analysis.

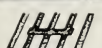
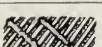
Number	Interior	Lip	Neck	Shoulder	Castel. Form	Castel. Design
84	—	—	—	—	—	—
21	—	Incised	—	—	—	—
9	—	—	—	—		same as rim
6	—	Incised		—	—	—
6	—	Incised			—	—
3	—	—	—	—		same as rim
3	—	—		—	—	—
2	—	—	—		—	—
2	—	—	—	—		
1	—	—	—	—		
1	—	—		—	—	—
1	—	—		—	—	—
1	—	—		—		same as rim
1	—	Punctated		—	—	—
1	Incised	Incised	—	—	—	—
1	—	Incised	—	—		
1	—	Incised	—	—		same as rim
1	—	Incised		—	—	—
1	—	Incised	?	—	—	—
1	—	—		—	—	—
1	—	—	—	—		

GROUP 4 RIM SHERDS**Distribution of Secondary Decoration****GROUP 5 RIM SHERDS****Distribution of Secondary Decoration**

comitant variations within the sample. The results were as follows. No correlation was found between rim-form and collar height or collar decoration. It was concluded, therefore, that rim-form in this instance — and with this group of sherds only — had no diagnostic value. We were left, then, with secondary decoration, that is, interior, lip, neck and shoulder decoration, and castellations.

Group 2 has secondary decoration on 63 of 193 sherds. That is, 32.64% of these sherds have secondary decoration. The distribution of this decoration is shown on Table 2.

Number	Form of Cross	Lip	Neck	Shoulder	Castel. Form	Castel. Design
5						
5						
4						
1		Incised				
1			?			
1			?			
1						

Number	Form of Cross	Lip	Neck	Shoulder	Castel. Form	Castel. Design
3		Incised				
3		Incised	?			
1						
1						
1						same as rim
1		Incised				
1						same as rim
1						
1						
1						

Group 3 has secondary decoration on 64 of 148 sherds. That is, 43.24% of these sherds have secondary decoration (Table 3).

Group 4 has secondary decoration on 13 of 18 sherds. That is, 72.22% of these sherds have secondary decoration (Table 4).

TABLE 6

Collar Height (mm.)

Group No.	No.	Min.	Max.	Average
2	184	4	20	9.9
3	144	4	23	9.8
4	18	11	24	15.0
5	14	9	14	11.0
6	41	29	76	52.4
7	45	29	76	54.7
Total	446			

And finally, Group 5 has secondary decoration on 11 of 14 sherds. That is, 78.57% of these sherds have secondary decoration (Table 5).

The difference between Groups 2 and 3 in the percentage of sherds with secondary decoration is probably due to sampling error. And the difference between Group 4 and Group 5 is probably also due to sampling error. But the difference between Group 2 or 3 and Group 4 or 5 is much too large to be attributed to sampling error, and therefore reflects a significant difference. That is, there is a positive and high correlation between "crossed" designs on the collar and the presence of secondary decoration.

To summarize: we have recorded and charted certain features ("modes" or "attributes") of the rim-sherd sample from the excavation at Methodist Point. We have tested these attributes for concomitant variations and found that by this method, the majority of the rims (over 90%) fall neatly into three classes. Each of these classes can then be divided into two sub-classes, called "groups" in the above discussion. "Groups" in any class are distinguished by the presence or absence of a horizontal line of closely spaced punctates immediately below the collar.

We have attempted, in the above discussion, to describe the material culture of an historic Huron village. The adequacy of the description is determined by the adequacy of the sample, and this, at present, is not known. With the sample at hand, however, the analysis has been thoroughly rigorous. That is, anyone else could take the Methodist Point rim-sherds, apply the same analytical criteria, and arrive at precisely the same results.

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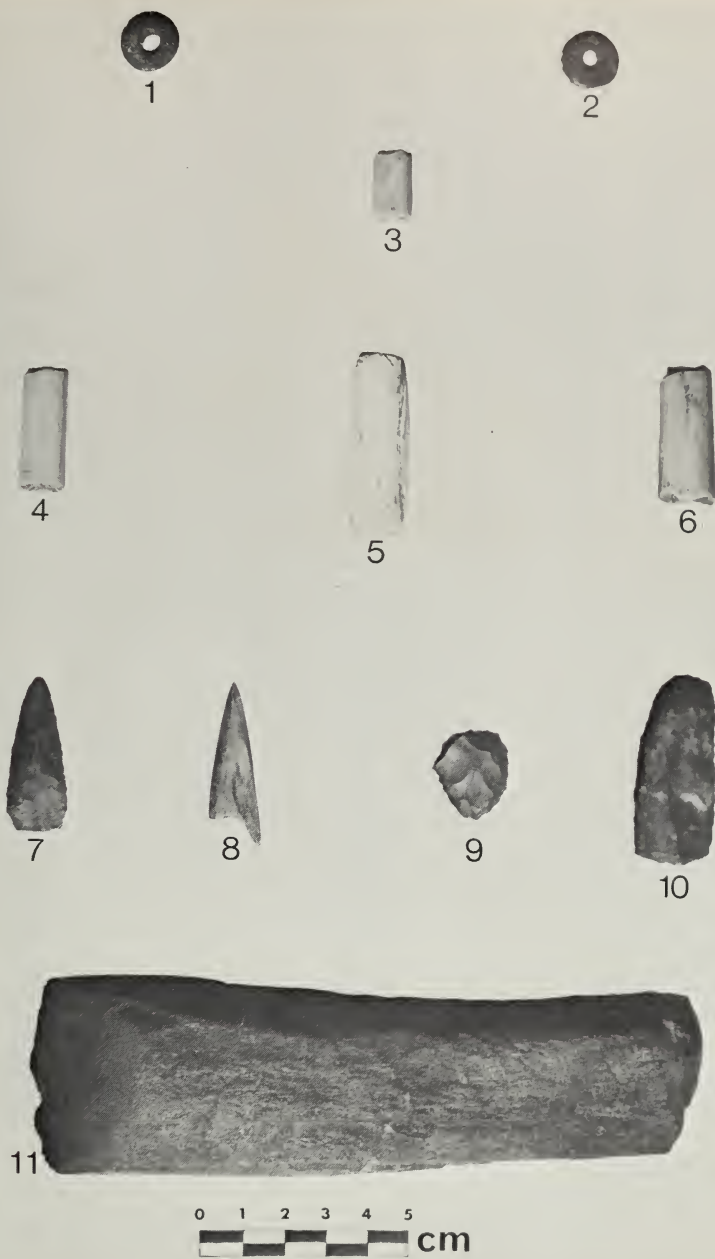


Plate 1

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1 Steatite bead | 7 Flint point |
| 2 Steatite bead | 8 Bone point |
| 3 Bone bead | 9 Flint end scraper |
| 4 Bone bead | 10 Flint scraper |
| 5 Shell bead | 11 Schist adze |
| 6 Bone bead | |



Plate 2

1 Bone awl

2 Bone awl

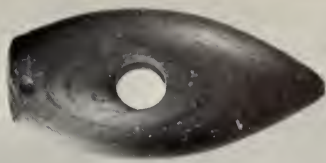
3 Bone awl

4 Bone awl

5 Bone awl

6 Bone awl

7 Bone awl



1



2



3

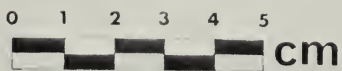
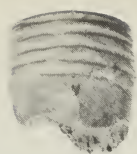


Plate 3 1 Stone object 2 Toy pot 3 Miscellaneous rim



1



2



3



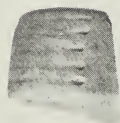
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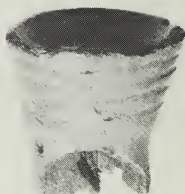
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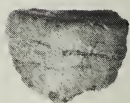
6



7



8



9



10



11



Plate 4

1 Iroquois ring pipe bowl fragment

2 Iroquois ring pipe bowl fragment

3 Iroquois ring pipe bowl fragment

4 Iroquois ring pipe bowl fragment

5 Iroquois ring pipe bowl fragment

6 Conical punctate pipe bowl fragment

7 Iroquois ring pipe bowl fragment

8 Conical ring pipe bowl fragment

9 Iroquois ring pipe bowl fragment

10 Plain trumpet pipe fragment

11 Iroquois ring pipe

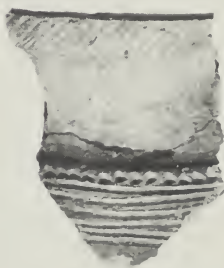
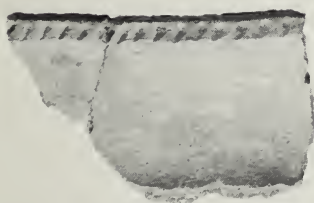
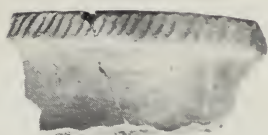


Plate 5 *Group 2 rim-sherds*



Plate 6 *Group 3 rim-sherds*

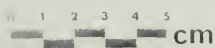
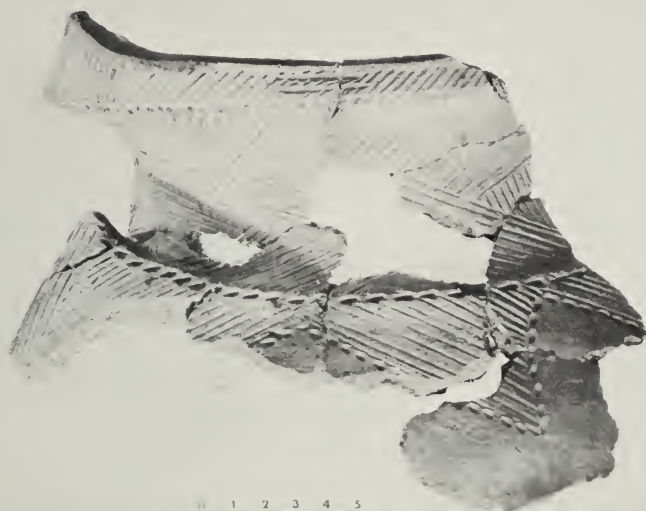
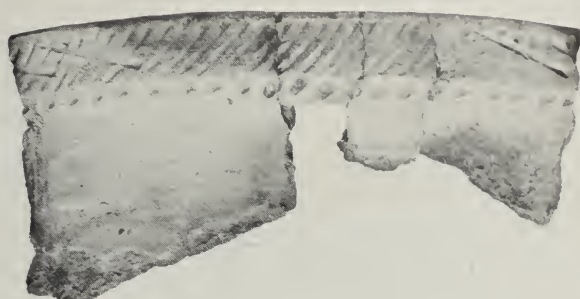


Plate 7 *Group 4 and 5 rim-sherds*



Plate 8 *Group 6 and 7 rim-sherds*



Plate 9 *Group 6 and 7 rim-sherds*

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